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THE CHORAGIC MONUMENT OF NICIAS

THE final identification of the foundation for this monument by Mr. Dinsmoor, and his paper in this JOURNAL (Vol. XIV (1910), pp. 459-484), brings the long discussion of the subject nearly to a close. There is still one point, however, where his conclusions need revision. This point concerns what Plutarch saw to justify his words in the *Life of Nicias* (III, 3). Plutarch says that two dedicatory monuments of Nicias were standing in his day, "the Palladium on the Acropolis, — the one that has lost its gilding, καὶ ὁ τοῖς χορηγικοῖς τρίποσιν ὑποκείμενος ἐν Διονύσου νεώς · for he won many victories with choruses, and was never defeated." The second monument which Plutarch saw was a temple on which were placed several choragic tripods, and he at once explains why there were more than one. The Greek is not fairly susceptible of any other translation. It was only ignorance of the original site of the choragic temple of Nicias the Younger which led to the attempt to give the Greek a different meaning. When Plato saw the tripods of Nicias the Elder and his brothers, they were not on a temple, as his language (Plato, *Gorgias*, 472 A) clearly shows: ὧν οἱ τρίποδες οἱ ἐφεξῆς ἐστῶτές εἰσιν ἐν τῷ Διονυσίῳ. Of Plutarch's language it is not fair to say, as Mr. Dinsmoor does: "Plutarch adds, however, what Plato does not mention, that lying below (or near or beyond) this row of tripods was a choragic νεώς, also dedicated by Nicias." Plutarch "adds" nothing. He mentions two extant dedicatory monuments of Nicias the Elder, — a Palladium on the Acropolis, and a temple in the precinct of Dionysus. He distinguishes the Palladium from other similar figures about or near it by the fact that it had lost its gilding; and the temple from other temples near it by the fact that it was surmounted by choragic tripods.

Now it is reasonably certain that Nicias the Elder did not put his tripods on a temple. No instance of such a base for a choragic tripod can be found for the fifth century. In the latter part of the fourth century, on the other hand, a temple was an accepted and frequent form of base, as extant remains abundantly show. This is clearly put more than once by Mr. Dinsmoor. The temple form of base "suits the increase in ostentation and display of private wealth by the choregi after the impulse given by the completion of the theatre by Lycurgus about 340 B.C." But Plutarch saw the tripods of Nicias on a temple in the precinct of Dionysus, and it is now clear that the temple of Nicias the Younger stood in the precinct of Dionysus. The conclusion is inevitable that Plutarch saw the tripods of Nicias the Elder and his brothers on the temple of Nicias the Younger, and was careless in not noticing that the inscription on the temple emanated not from the elder, but from the younger Nicias. The precinct of Dionysus may well have been crowded with monuments when the younger Nicias sought permission to erect there a temple to support his choragic tripod, and permission may have been granted him only on condition that he utilize the space where the row of tripods dedicated by Nicias and his brothers already stood, and have his temple support not only his own tripod, but also those of his elder namesake, and, possibly, kinsman. Just how it came to pass, and how the acroterial positions on the temple were allotted to the tripods, we do not know now; but of the fact that in Plutarch's time the choragic temple of Nicias the Younger supported not only his own tripod, but also those of Nicias the Elder and his brothers, we may, it would seem, be fairly certain.

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